

To Helen Back

by C.E. Forman

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To Helen Back

One-sentence summary: Jake and Helen subject the girls to the horrors of "Take Your Daughter to Work" Day.

First off, let me say that I love the TV show just the way it is, and have tried to be as true as possible to it here, keeping the general style and plotline in the direction the show's writers seem to have their minds set on. You won't find the start of any outrageous story arcs, new major characters or departures in style from the "Daria" we all know and love. Please let me know how close I got. (And if you're from MTV, I should mention I'd love to do this for a living.)

If you have suggestions for music that'd go good with what I've written here, send it over. (I'm not very up on the popular-music industry.)

Thanks to everyone who wrote to say they enjoyed "Lotto Nonsense." This script's existence is a direct result of your feedback. Please keep the comments coming.

(...la la LA la la...)

Daria in "To Helen Back"

Written by C.E. Forman (ceforman@worldnet.att.net)

BEGIN ACT 1.

EXT.: LAWNDALe HIGH. TUESDAY.

(Sound of bell ringing.)

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNGDALE HIGH. MR O'NEILL'S CLASSROOM.

(Mr O'Neill is seated behind his desk, holding a book and using his thumb as a bookmark, watching as the last of his students file into class.)

O'NEILL: I hope everyone remembered that today is our bi-weekly "book hour". I think it's wonderful that we can take time out from the rigors of studying once in a while to have a little fun! (Over-the-top enthusiasm.) So let's get those books out and start *reading*! (Opens his own book.)

JANE: (To Daria.) Awriiight, your favorite time of the week!

DARIA: I've been looking forward to this all day. Anything that lets me escape the bleak, soul-shrivelling reality of my life, however momentarily, is a plus in my book.

(Daria pulls out Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath". Jane has her Goya book, natch.)

BRITTANY: (Digging in that stupid pink rabbit purse-thing of hers.) Oh, no! I don't *have* a book!

KEVIN: Don't worry, cupcake! I brought enough for both of us! (He hands her a copy of "Go, Dog, Go".)

DARIA: (Notices, hands Brittany a bookmark.) Here. In case you don't finish it in an hour. (Turns back to her book.)

(Jane smirks.)

BRITTANY: (Daria's sarcasm goes *whooshhh*, over her head.) Thanks, Daria!

KEVIN: This is cool! I've been meaning to read some of the classics!

O'NEILL: I'm delighted to hear you say that, Kevin!

JANE: (To Kevin.) I hate to ruin this for you Kevin, but at the end he finally eats the green eggs and ham.

(Beat.)

KEVIN: (Genuinely disappointed, throws the book down.) Awwww, *man*!! (He digs through the small stack at his feet and comes up with "Curious George".)

(Everyone reads quietly for about three seconds until a knock sounds at the door. All the students look up, Mr O'Neill turns toward the door as it opens and Ms Li enters, followed by Ms Barch.)

O'NEILL: Ms Li! And Ms Barch! What a pleasant surprise! (He's looking primarily at Ms Barch as he says this. She winks back at him.)

LI: Mr O'Neill. May we borrow a minute of your time.

O'NEILL: Certainly!

JANE: Uh-ohhhh. Looks like the bleak, soul-shrivelling reality of your life is about to come crashing down again.

DARIA: You can just tell this is gonna be stupid.

JANE: (Pretend-placatingly.) Now, now. Hear the nice lady out, first.

O'NEILL: (To Li, explaining.) We were just in the middle of our--

LI: (Cutting O'Neill off.) May I have everyone's attention please?

(Cut to Li's POV of the class. Most have gone back to reading, doodling, listening to music, sleeping, doing other things. Brittany is reapplying her nail polish. Kevin is holding his open book upside-down. Among those actually paying attention are: Daria, Jane, Jodie, Mack and Andrea... although Andrea hasn't even taken a book out and is just sitting there vacantly. Cut back to Li at the front of the room.)

LI: (Continuing.) Ms Barch has just brought to my attention a very exciiting idea, one that concerns aaallll of the young women here at Laaawwnndale Hiiiighhhhh.

DARIA: (To Jane.) Is it too late for me to apply for a foreign-exchange program?

JANE: Bosnia's starting to look good, huh?

LI: (Continuing.) Since next Monday has been recognized as national "Take Your Daughter to Work Day"--

BRITTANY: (Looks up from her nails, interrupts.) Oh, no! I don't *have* a daughter!

JANE: (Aside, to Daria.) Just give her another year.

DARIA: (Smirks admiringly at Jane's viciousness.) *Ouch*.

LI: (Continuing.) ...as a special event, all the young ladies will be excused for one day to attend work with a parent -- or other legal guardian -- to observe their careers in action!

BRITTANY: (Reaches over, puts arm around Kevin. Whining.) But why can't Kevvie come too?

BARCH: Because the sad truth is, in today's sexist, male-dominated workplace, even a pea-brained *imbecile* like Kevin stands a better chance of landing a good job than a bright, competent young woman.

(Ms Li looks a bit displeased at her choice of words, but doesn't want to say anything.)

BARCH: (Continuing.) The Lawndale Women's Movement is hoping to change this abomination, by sponsoring programs like this.

(Mack raises his hand as if to say something.)

BARCH: Shut up, Mack! (Glares, mutters to herself.) Twenty-two *years* and then one day he downsizes me right out of his life...

LI: (Speaking to the girls.) I urge every one of you to take advantage of this opportunity, though as always, participation is strictly voluntary.

DARIA: (To Jane.) That must mean it's non-profit for the school.

O'NEILL: (Thrilled beyond his ability to express himself.) Doesn't this sound *exciting*, class?

(Cut to O'Neill's POV of the class. No reactions whatsoever. Oh wait, Daria blinks. But that's all.)

O'NEILL: (Prompting.) Daria?

DARIA: (Sardonic deadpan.) Anything that challenges the patriarchy is a plus in my book.

BARCH: (Pleased, thinks she's serious.) *Very* good, Daria! I don't believe you've gotten any extra credit in my class recently, let me just mark you down for a few points... (She takes out a notepad and scratches something on it.)

LI: Permission slips and sign-up sheets are available in the office, and you may stop by anytime. (Prepares to leave, then turns back to the class.) And while you're there, if you happen to be the person who stole the intercom from my desk, please return it so I don't have to keep coming around to individual classes to make these announcements.

(Li and Barch exit, closing the door behind them.)

JANE: (To Daria.) There, that wasn't so bad, now was it?

DARIA: Great. I get to choose between a normal day of teenage exile at school, and spending the whole day with my parents. Now I just need to figure out which is less traumatic.

JANE: (Digging in her pocket.) Got a quarter here somewhere...

KEVIN: (He's been pondering for awhile.) Hey, Daria, what's an "imbecile"?

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNSDALE HIGH, HALLWAY, OUTSIDE MS LI'S OFFICE.

(Li's door is open and girls are lined up out into the hallway by the trophy case, Daria and Jane at the end. Quinn arrives and spots them.)

QUINN: (Surprised.) *You*? (Joins the queue behind Jane.) I can't believe this, *you're* actually signing up to participate in

something?

DARIA: It wasn't my idea.

JANE: (Explanatory, holds out her quarter to Quinn.) It came up tails.

(The line advances as this dialogue continues.)

QUINN: But I don't wanna spend the whole day with *you*!

DARIA: Relax, Mom hasn't killed Dad yet, we still have two parents. You go with one, I go with the other. (Beat.) Now we just need to decide which one's easier to tolerate for eight straight hours.

JANE: (Holds up her quarter again.) Call it.

QUINN: Umm... Heads Mom, tails Dad.

(Jane flips the coin.)

JANE: Tails. (To Daria.) Looks like quality time for you and Helen.

DARIA: I'm incapable of adequately expressing my delight.

(The rest of the Fashion Club arrives and joins the line.)

SANDI: (Greetings.) Hey, Quinn. Quinn's cousin or whatever. Quinn's cousin or whatever's little friend, or whatever.

QUINN: Hi, Sandi. Stacy. Tiffany. You guys are signing up too?

SANDI: (Snide.) Do you have a problem with that, Quinn? Did you want to be like, different from us, or something? If you did, maybe you should just *resign* from the Fashion Club?

QUINN: (Innocently.) Of *course* not, Sandi, don't be silly! This just didn't seem like the type of thing you'd want to get involved in. (Doesn't want a fight, looks pleadingly at Stacy and Tiffany. Stacy looks away, like she'd rather be somewhere else right now.)

TIFFANY: (Interjects, saving Quinn.) So why *are* we doing this anyway?

SANDI: As members of the Fashion Club, it is our duty to help ensure the survival of fashion statements in the very workplaces we ourselves will one day be a part of.

DARIA: (To Jane.) Assuming anyone will hire college flunk-outs with a degree in bouncy hair.

JANE: Hey, just you watch. They're coming up with new job descriptions every day.

SANDI: (To Quinn.) My Mom says your Mom has like a big legal thing or something next week. I hope she doesn't screw it up like she did with

the mother-daughter fashion show.

(Daria overhears, frowns.)

QUINN: (Indignant.) She **won't**. Besides, I'm going with my Dad. My... cousin's going with my Mom.

(Daria frowns at this, too.)

SANDI: Speaking of Moms... (To Tiffany.) Better call the modelling agency and make sure your "Mom" will be available.

TIFFANY: Yeah.

(By this time, the line has advanced enough to move them into Ms Li's office. Cut to interior office shot. Li is at her desk, doing paperwork as the girls in line sign a sheet on her desk and take permission slips from a short stack of papers.)

DARIA: (Turns, notices Jane.) What are you still doing in line? I thought your Dad was still on retreat in the Great Cavern.

JANE: He is. They sent a rescue expedition last week. (Beat.) Actually, I've been hoping for a chance to do some pottery with my mother. Besides, anything that gets me out of this slave-factory hellhole for a day is a plus in my book.

(Li looks up and glares, but can't tell for sure who said it. Daria signs the sheet and takes a permission slip, waits for Jane.)

DARIA: You could always join me for an all-day legal jubilee with my Mother.

JANE: Okay, **almost** anything. Anyway, my Mom'll probably be thrilled I'm following in her shoeless footsteps.

(Jane finishes signing up and takes a slip for herself.)

DARIA: Mine's so wrapped up in her work right now she'll barely notice me.

JANE: Oh, knowing Helen she'll be rendered speechless with joy, just you watch. CUT TO:

EXT.: MORGENDORFFER RESIDENCE. EARLY EVENING, FRIDAY.

HELEN'S VOICE: What do you **mean** you haven't spoken with them yet?!

CUT TO:

INT.: MORGENDORFFER KITCHEN.

(The Morgendorffers at dinner. Jake is engrossed in the paper. Helen, on the phone and completely stressed out, is pacing around the table, gesticulating as she talks.)

HELEN: (On phone.) In case you've forgotten, we wrap up witnesses and closing arguments next **week**! (Pause.) Yes, I **know** we've still got

the weekend, and we're going to need every minute as it is! This is the biggest case I've had and I'm not about to botch it! You think the pressure's on now, just *wait* until Sunday night! (Beat.) *No*, no more excuses, you call RIGHT NOW and find out what witnesses they're planning to use and GET THEIR STATEMENTS SO WE CAN WORK UP A DEFENSE!!

QUINN: (To Jake.) What's wrong with Mom?

DARIA: I don't see anything unusual.

JAKE: (Looks up from the paper, sees Helen.) Oh, *hi* honey, you're home!

(Helen scowls at Jake, who looks guilty and buries his face back in the paper.)

HELEN: (On phone.) Well of *course* I am, in case you've forgotten, *I'm* the one Eric's going to have up there presenting all this to Reinhardt on Monday-- (Pause.) Look, just... just put Eric on the line. (Pause.) Well *find* him for christsake, it's not a very big office building, he's got to be *somewhere*, have one of the male janitors check the restrooms!

(The phone emits a beep.)

HELEN: That's the call-waiting, hold on. (Hits a button, puts the phone back to her ear.) Hello? I'm sorry, I'm in a very important call, Quinn'll have to get back to you. (Back to the first call.) Did you try paging him? (Beat.) Well why *NOT*?!

(Cut to the rest of the family at the table.)

JAKE: (Can't concentrate on the paper with Helen shouting.) So... how's school, girls?

DARIA: Compared to this? I would say... still agonizing beyond words.

QUINN: Stacy spilled her moisturizer in science today.

(Cut to Helen.)

HELEN: (On phone.) *No*, I don't know it, I *never* use it myself, it's in my speed-dial! (Pause.) Bottom row, third button from the right.

(The phone emits another beep.)

HELEN: (Irritated sigh.) Hold *on*... (Switches calls.) Hello? (Beat.) Look, for someone who wants to be my daughter's boyfriend, you are *not* making a good first impression with me, now I *told* you Quinn will call you back, *later*! Good-*BYE*! (Switches back.) Have you found him *yet*?! (Instant cheerfulness.) Oh, *hi*, Eric! No, everything's fine, I was just asking Sue--

(The doorbell rings.)

HELEN: (Exasperated sigh.) That's the doorbell, can you hold a minute, Eric? (Lowers the phone, mutters.) Seems I have to do

everything around here...

JAKE: (To the girls, whining.) But I made dinner! And I did the dishes and mowed the lawn the other day!

(Jake hides back in the paper as Helen passes by the table on her way out of the dining room.)

DARIA: Don't feel bad, she never acknowledges anything I do either. Unless it pisses her off.

HELEN: (Heard that.) Language, Daria!

DARIA: See what I mean?

QUINN: (Out loud, to herself.) I hope that wasn't Donny Mom was yelling at. He has Splash World season-tickets.

CUT TO:

INT.: MORGENDORFFERS' LIVING ROOM.

HELEN: (Entering, walking to the door, pacifying tone.) Of course I'm not stressed out over this, Eric, it's just that Jake and the girls never seem to help out when I really need it, hang on, this'll just be a moment...

(Helen throws open the door and, before even seeing who it is, shouts:)

HELEN: *WHAT*?!

(Cut to the open door. It's Mr O'Neill, with a handful of papers, and he yelps and cowers in fear at Helen's tone.)

HELEN: (Into phone.) Huh? (Pleasant.) No, not you, Eric! It's these constant interruptions, just a sec...

(O'Neill has just used this time to regain his composure. Helen covers the mouthpiece with her hand and again demands:)

HELEN: *WHAT*?!

O'NEILL: (Cowering again, perspiration starting to flow.) Umm, g-good evening, Mrs Morningloafer... I-I'm Mr--

HELEN: (Snappish, interrupting.) Timothy O'Neill, the girls' English teacher, yes, what are you doing coming here this hour on a Friday night?!

O'NEILL: (Intimidated.) Ummm, well, you see, n-next Monday Lawndale High is sponsoring "Take Your Daughter to Work" Day. See, all of the female students were given the opportunity to--

HELEN: (Impatient.) Can we pick up the pace a bit, I've got a *vitally* important conversation on hold here, plus I missed lunch today and I haven't even gotten to *touch* my supper yet!

O'NEILL: (Sweating profusely, talking very rapidly.) Umm, all the girls who signed up had their parents sign permission slips and write

down their work number so-- (Holds out two sheets of paper, one for Daria, one for Quinn) --I put together a list of all the numbers in case the girls wanted to call each other and share their experiences only I didn't get it done until today because--

HELEN: (Interrupting, snatching the now sweat-drenched papers from O'Neill's hands.) *THANK* you Mr O'Neill, in the future please call in advance before dropping by, and since you seem to have so much free time on your hands you might consider learning to GET OUR FAMILY'S NAME RIGHT, it's "Morgendorffer", that's M-o-r-g-e-n-d-o-r-f-f-e-r, it's *not* that difficult, try writing it down about fifty times and see if that makes it stick in that little emotionally oversaturated mush-pile you call your head! Good *NIGHT*!

(She slams the door in O'Neill's face.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: MORGENDORFFER RESIDENCE, OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR.

(Mr O'Neill shudders, wipes his brow with the rest of the sweaty papers he's holding.)

CUT TO:

INT.: MORGENDORFFER KITCHEN.

(Jake has been watching Helen over the paper. When she returns, he ducks back inside it again. Daria removes Helen's dinner, which she's thoughtfully reheated, from the microwave, sets it back at Helen's place at the table.)

HELEN: (Enters, on phone.) Yes, sorry about that, Eric, where were we...? I was just checking in to make sure we had everything we needed from the prosecution team... You did? (Pleased.) *Great!* (Beat.) Mm-hmm, you too.

(She hits a button to disconnect the call, sighs pleasantly now that that's taken care of, immediately assumes a cheerful expression.)

HELEN: (Hands Quinn the phone.) Quinn, honey, you're supposed to call... either a Tyler or a Skyler, I don't remember which.

QUINN: That's okay, I'll call both! (She takes the phone and leaves.)

(Helen picks up her untouched dinner and carries it to the microwave to warm it back up, completely overlooking the fact Daria's already done it for her. Daria shoots Jake a "See?" look, but Jake is peering intently at something in the paper.)

JAKE: Hey, look! In the Court News section! You're famous, honey! (Reads.) "Defense attorneys Eric Schrecker and Helen Morgendorffer are gearing up for the final leg of the Atchison assault trial--"

HELEN: (Interrupts.) Jake, *please*. The *last* thing I need right now is more pressure to win this case! (Removes her re-reheated

lasagna from the microwave, sits down at the table, changes the subject.) I'm glad you'll be joining me, Daria. I never got to do anything like this when I was your age.

JAKE: (Reliving his childhood.) Ohhhh, can I ever relate to **that**! I **begged** my Dad to let me come to work with him, but **nooooo**, he wouldn't **hear** of it, didn't want little Jakey getting in the way and embarrassing him at his little after-work beer-guzzling with all his buddies--!

HELEN: (Cuts off Jake's rant.) I just wish all of your school's events were as worthwhile as "Take Your Daughter to Work" Day.

DARIA: (Deadpan.) Anything that lets me spend quality time with my wonderful family is a plus in my book.

JAKE: (Beaming.) Wow, it's great to hear you say that, kiddo!

HELEN: (Dryly.) Jake, she's being sarcastic.

JAKE: Oh.

CUT TO:

EXT.: MORGENDORFFER RESIDENCE.

(Mr O'Neill quietly climbs into his car.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: MORGENDORFFER RESIDENCE, CLOSE-UP OF O'NEILL'S CAR.

(Mr O'Neill sits silently for a few moments, taking deep breaths, attempting to calm himself.)

O'NEILL: (Self-reassurance.) I'm okay, everything's okay, that went very well... I'm okay, everything's okay, that went very well... (Abruptly breaks down.) Awww, who'm I kidding?!

(He whimpers, pulls his knees up to his chest in a fetal position, and begins sucking on his thumb, sobbing.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: MORGENDORFFER RESIDENCE, MORNING. MONDAY.

CUT TO:

INT.: QUINN'S ROOM.

(Quinn is at her three mirrors, composing an outfit. She has on a sheer top with a super-short black skirt, heels and a furry boa-scarf thing wrapped around her neck. She turns this way and that, inspecting herself from several angles. Daria enters.)

DARIA: (Just a hint of urgency in the monotone.) Hold on. Don't move. Something's crawled up around your neck.

QUINN: (Turns around.) *What*?

(Daria grabs Quinn's scarf, yanks it to the floor and stomps on it with one of her boots.)

QUINN: Hey!!

DARIA: There, it's dead. (Puts a hand mock-reassuringly on Quinn's shoulder.) You're safe now, little sister.

QUINN: (Furious, shrugs her sister's hand away.) Damn you, Daria! (Picks up the scarf.) I just bought this, now it's ruined! (Smooths it out again as best she can, picks off grit from Daria's boots.)

DARIA: Shouldn't you be dressing professionally for your first meeting with the corporate world?

QUINN: I *am*. (Picks up an open magazine on her bed, holds it up for Daria to see.) I got the idea from Waif's "workplace" issue. This *is* professional, Daria.

DARIA: If your workplace is a street corner.

QUINN: (Angry.) Why don't you go pick out what *you're* going to wear, instead of standing here criticizing *my* taste?

DARIA: You have taste? You could've fooled me.

(Quinn glares as Daria walks out and disappears around the corner. Quinn has just turned back to the mirror when Daria reappears, two seconds later, still wearing the green jacket and skirt.)

DARIA: All done.

QUINN: You can't honestly be planning to wear *that*! It's hideous!

DARIA: At least it'll cut down on the sexual harassment. What do you care anyway? We won't even be in the same building.

QUINN: (Grudgingly.) I guess. (Goes to her makeup table, offers Daria a compact.) Rouge?

DARIA: I'll pass, thanks.

QUINN: Daria, would it really *kill* you to wear a little makeup just *once*?

DARIA: Probably not, but I'm still scared to try. (Turns to leave.) Have fun being Dad's escort.

(Quinn, infuriated, hurls the compact at Daria's head, but it misses, hitting the wall and landing in the hallway.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: STREET, FRONT VIEW OF HELEN AND DARIA IN CAR. MONDAY.

HELEN: I'm really glad we're doing this, sweetie. I've been doing all

kinds of shopping with Quinn lately, but we've never really gotten to do anything *you* enjoy.

DARIA: (Mock suspicion.) And just how did you learn about my secret love of jurisprudence?

HELEN: That's not what I meant, honey, I'm just glad we're getting this time together.

DARIA: Amazing how mother-daughter bonding coincides with work. Maybe you and Dad could plan a romantic evening there sometime.

HELEN: (Doesn't like her daughter's attitude, but doesn't want this to escalate.) Daria, why can't you just *once* show a little enthusiasm for something?

DARIA: If I ever find anything worth being enthusiastic about, believe me, you'll be the first to know about it.

HELEN: Did I mention we're meeting your father and Quinn for a nice dinner after work?

DARIA: (Not enthusiastic about this either.) Nope, keep trying.

(They arrive at a stoplight, and Helen makes a right.)

DARIA: Mom? Isn't your office the other way?

HELEN: Yes, honey. But today we're wrapping up a court case.

(Helen nears the Lawndale courthouse and pulls the car into a parallel parking space across from it. Daria realizes what she's going to be subjected to all day and gets an appropriate why-didn't-I-just-go-to-school expression.)

(...la la LA la la...)

(COMMERCIAL LEAD-IN: Split-screen of Helen shouting, and Mr O'Neill in the car, sucking his thumb.)

END ACT 1.

(COMMERCIAL: As one, let us all weep tears of joy for four and a half minutes, as images of jeans, \$129.99 shoes, two kinds of tampons, and potato chips that come in a can forever alter our lives for the better.)

BEGIN ACT 2.

RETURN TO:

EXT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE.

(Sounds of birds and the large fountain that dominates the courtyard. Close-up of the steps as Helen proceeds up, followed by Daria. Newspaper and television reporters -- three different logos on the cameras for the three local TV stations -- flank both sides of the steps. Some of them recognize Helen and the whole swarm descends, snapping pictures and waving microphones.)

HELEN: (Aside, to Daria.) Just ignore them. (To the reporters, who are asking typical reporter questions, trying to drown each other out and be heard.) No comment. I have no comment on my client's case at this time. (Daria gets her share of curious looks and questions.)

DARIA: (To the reporters, explaining.) Relief attorney. I'll be filling in if she gets exhausted or suffers any debilitating injuries.

(The reporters go nuts over this statement. Helen shoots Daria an if-looks-could-kill look.)

DARIA: (To one of the TV cameraman, points.) Lens cap's on.

(Actually it's not, but the cameraman turns it around at himself to check anyway, and ends up looking ridiculous. Daria smirks. Helen grabs her daughter by the wrist and drags her through the door.)

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE.

(Outside a pair of large courtroom double-doors. Waiting for Helen are Eric, his niece Jasmine, and a heavysset, balding man whom we can safely assume is Atchison, the defendant.)

HELEN: (Angry.) Daria, that was **not** funny, those people-- (Spots Eric, mood switch.) Hi, Eric. Carl. (Introducing.) Daria, this is Eric my boss, and Mr Atchison. Eric, Carl, my daughter Daria.

(Daria presents Eric and Atchison with limp handshakes.)

ERIC: (To Helen.) You remember Jasmine, my niece. She wanted to come with me for "Take Your Daughter to Work" Day.

HELEN: Yes, hello, Jasmine.

(Helen turns to consult with Eric and Atchison, ignoring the girls.)

JASMINE: (To Daria.) I'm Jasmine. So your name's Dara?

DARIA: Daria, actually.

JASMINE: I like your jacket.

DARIA: Umm, okay.

JASMINE: I mean, it'd look good on **me**.

(Daria frowns a bit at this.)

JASMINE: So is your Mom all stressed out over this stupid case?

DARIA: Among other things. None of them involving her family, of course.

JASMINE: Yeah, Uncle Eric too.

DARIA: I should've just gone with my Dad instead, and spent a nice, relaxing day in a nice, quiet office.

CUT TO:

EXT.: PARKING LOT OUTSIDE OFFICE BUILDING, DOWNTOWN.

JAKE'S VOICE: Dammit!

(Close-up of Jake and Quinn in the car. Quinn is wearing the outfit she chose before, only minus the boa.)

JAKE: Can you **believe** this?! That bastard took **my** parking space, the inconsiderate jerk!!

QUINN: (Points.) There's one, Daddy!

(Jake floors it like a maniac, tires screeching as he peels toward where Quinn's directed him. Just before he can swing in, someone cuts him off and steals the empty spot.)

JAKE: (Rolls down window, honks horn.) HEY! **I** had that spot, that was **MINE**! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA OF--

(Sound of the just-parked car's door opening and closing.)

JAKE: HEY! HEY, WHERE'RE YOU GOING YOU LITTLE SNOT-NOSED WEASEL!? GET BACK HERE!! (Sticks his head out the window.) I SAID-- (Punctuates each word with a honk of the horn.) **GET**! **BACK**! **HERE**!

(Quinn shrinks down in her seat so no one will see her. There's a loud bang and the car shudders, startling Jake and Quinn. Sound of another horn honking. Pan right to reveal another driver has just rear-ended Jake. He's boxed in and can't go forward or back up.)

JAKE: DAMMIT!!

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM.

(People are slowly filling the available seats on both sides. Eric, Helen and Atchison enter, followed by Daria and Jasmine. The prosecution team, a sharp-featured, menacing male-female pair, are already present with the plaintiff, a fairly ordinary middle-aged man with glasses and his head completely bandaged.)

DARIA: Abandon all hope ye who enter here.

JASMINE: (Laughs.) You're funny.

(The group reaches the front, near the bench. Eric and Atchison sit down at the defense table. Eric opens a briefcase and lays out paperwork.)

HELEN: (Directing Jasmine and Daria.) Here, girls, you can sit behind us.

(Jasmine slides in first. Helen grabs Daria's sleeve.)

HELEN: (To Daria, low conspiratorial voice.) And no matter what happens, Daria, for God's sake keep your mouth under control. This judge is a real hard-ass and we can't afford to blow this case.

DARIA: I'll be good.

(Helen lets go, and Daria sits down.)

DARIA: (To herself.) Next week. (Smirks.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING.

JAKE'S VOICE: Just down here, honey.

CUT TO:

INT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, JAKE'S OFFICE.

(Jake leads Quinn through a hallway lined with office doors. From inside, several young guys in suits and ties peek out at Quinn as she passes. She notices and smiles, enjoying the attention. Jake, oblivious, unlocks a door that has "JAKE MORGENDORFFER CONSULTING, INC." in block letters on the glass, and opens it.)

CUT TO:

INT.: JAKE'S OFFICE.

(Jake switches on the light and enters with Quinn. It's a typical office, with paper-strewn desk, a few bookshelves and filing cabinets and a long conference table with several padded office chairs.)

JAKE: (Proud.) See, Quinn? This is where your ol' Dad wins his bread!

QUINN: (Yawns, bored already.) That's... great, Daddy. Umm, can I get a soda?

JAKE: Sure, sweetie! Breakroom's down the hall, on the left.

(Quinn heads out, down the hall.)

JAKE: (Calls after her.) I'm supposed to have some potential interns coming in today, see if they're waiting there, will you honey?

(Cut to the breakroom. Quinn enters, sees three interns, basically college- age clones of Joey, Jeffy and Jaime -- same hair colors, even -- in suits and ties. Two are seated, the third is leaning on the water cooler sipping from a paper cup. All three take notice as Quinn walks in.)

QUINN: (Smiles at them.) Hi.

INTERN #1: Hi! Can I get you a soda?

INTERN #2: I'll get you some ice!

INTERN #3: (The standing one, zips to the vending machine, change already in hand.) What kind d'you want?

INTERN #1: (Stands, pushing Intern #3 away.) Hey, *I* asked her first!

INTERN #3: So? Maybe whe wants *me* to get it!

(The three interns begin shouting at each other. Intern #1 shoves Intern #3 into the water cooler, knocking it over. All three raise their fists pugilistically.)

QUINN: (Her eyes showing horror, her smile delight, wails.) Oh, *no*! Not *again*!

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM.

(Court is filling up. Zoom in to where Helen and company are seated, cut to close-up of Helen turned around talking to Daria.)

ERIC: (To the girls, outlining the case.) Mr Atchison's one of our most important clients. He owns a lot of property in Lawndale and the outlying areas. The plaintiff Brinkley, he followed Atchison in an act of road-rage, got out of the car and harrassed him, but ended up tripping and cracking his head on a curb.

DARIA: Couldn't have done much damage.

HELEN: Anyway, now he's suing Mr Atchison for assault, and for pain and suffering from the concussion he got.

JASMINE: That sounds pretty stupid.

DARIA: That's the stupidest thing I've heard so far this month, and I go to school at Lawndale.

HELEN: Maybe so, but the papers have hyped it into a high-profile case. (To Jasmine.) Your Uncle Eric's giving me a chance to prove I can handle it.

ERIC: You'll do fine, Helen, I'm certain of that. Pull this off and you may be on the road to a partnership.

HELEN: (Daydreamy.) Just think, Daria: "Vitale, Davis, Horowitz, Riordan, Schrechter, Schrechter, Schrechter and Morgendorffer"!

DARIA: You'll probably have to start giving out bigger business cards.

(Eric and Jasmine chuckle amicably. Helen manages a smile.)

DARIA: Seriously, Mom, do you really want your big moment to come from a frivolous lawsuit? How could that guy even get a trial out of this anyway?

HELEN: Freedom to sue indiscriminately is the price of democracy, sweetie.

DARIA: God bless America.

HELEN: (Warning.) Just behave yourself, Daria.

ERIC: You too, Jasmine.

(Everyone faces front as the bailiff speaks.)

BAILIFF: All rise. Court is now in session. Case of Brinkley versus Atchison. The Honorable Judge Cornelius Reinhardt presiding.

(Reinhardt emerges from his chambers. He's in his mid-sixties, medium height, with sagging jowls and a fringe of hair all around his head but just a few strands on top.)

DARIA: Honorable? With a name like Cornelius?[*]

[*] Apologies to anyone reading this who's actually named Cornelius.

(Jasmine snickers at Daria's comment. Scattered chuckles from the jury as well, but we don't see them yet. Helen turns and glares sternly at Daria, Eric at Jasmine. Reinhardt looks in their direction, but can't tell for sure who said it, sits down.)

REINHARDT: (To the court, deep kind of gurgly old-guy voice.) Please be seated.

(Everyone obeys, but Daria stands just a mite longer.)

DARIA: (Sits, mutters.) Make up your mind.

(Raised eyebrow from Reinhardt. Helen turns and glares intently again, makes a "zip-the-lip" motion.)

CUT TO:

INT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, JAKE'S OFFICE.

(Jake is seated behind his desk, interviewing Intern #1, who's on the opposite side, in one of the chairs from the conference table. His suit is torn at the shoulder, shirt untucked, tie loose, black eye, from the fight. Quinn sits on the edge of Jake's desk, giving him little flirty looks and swinging her legs [with the super-short skirt, remember].)

JAKE: (Speech.) --and so at Morgendorffer Consulting, we offer a more personal, one-on-one relationship with our clients. Have you had any prior consulting experience, son?

INTERN #1: (Staring at Quinn, not paying much attention.) Huh? Oh,

yeah, several, but none of them lasted more than six months before we broke up.

JAKE: (Notices he's not paying attention, frowns.) Look at me when I'm talking to you, son.

INTERN #1: (Looking.) Oh, right.

JAKE: As I was saying, we take pride in our--

(Intern #1 goes back to ogling Quinn.)

JAKE: *Son*!

INTERN #1: (Snaps to attention.) Oh! Sorry. Can I have a job now?

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM.

MALE PROSECUTOR: (Confident.) Your honor, the prosecution would like to call Carl Atchison back to the stand.

HELEN: (Whispers to herself, Daria overhears.) Smug bastards, think they've got it in the bag...

(Atchison takes the stand. The bailiff holds up the obligatory Bible to swear him in.)

DARIA: Why don't they just use a polygraph? It's more reliable.

(Helen gives Daria another stern look. Reinhardt notices her this time, and his eyes narrow. Cut to the stand.)

FEMALE PROSECUTOR: Mr Atchison, do you not agree that my client, Mr Brinkley, never would have fallen and injured himself had he not had the prior encountered with you on the road?

HELEN: Objection, Your Honor! Council is leading the witness.

REINHARDT: (Looks at Daria behind Helen, realizes they're related, gets an evil jowly grin, retaliates against Daria's previous remark.) Overruled!

(Helen looks burned.)

CUT TO:

INT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, JAKE'S OFFICE.

(Jake's got Intern #2 in front of the desk now. Intern #2's in pretty much the same shape as Intern #1.)

QUINN: (Bored, digs out O'Neill's list.) Dad, can I call Sandi?

JAKE: Sure, go ahead sweetie.

(Quinn picks up the phone.)

JAKE: (To Intern #2, "I'm cool" tone, feet up on his desk.) So, my man, where you goin' to school?

INTERN #2: Well right now I'm majoring in business management at Middleton--

JAKE: (Delighted.) Middleton College? That's my old alma mater!

INTERN #2: No kidding? Did they have Toilet Paper Day back when you went?

JAKE: Sure! It was a tradition!

INTERN #2: Last month me and my friends TP'd the entire founder statue, head to toe, like a mummy!

JAKE: The one in front of the Student Union? Me too! Wow!

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM.

DARIA: This is even more ridiculous than "Family Court".

(This gets her a sharp look from the bailiff.)

HELEN: (Before the stand, grilling the plaintiff.) Mr Brinkley, is it true that in the past you've been on prescription stress-relief medicines and anti-psychotics?

MALE PROSECUTOR: Objection! Your Honor, this is irrelevant!

REINHARDT: (Still with a disdain for Helen.) Sustained.

HELEN: Your Honor, it is **not** irrelevant. The plaintiff had not been taking these medications for several weeks prior to the assault on my client. I have an expert witness ready to testify to that!

FEMALE PROSECUTOR: (Angry.) My client may have a mental instability, but by using it against him here today, you are trampling his civil rights!

HELEN: Your Honor, this is a bunch of politically-correct bull--

REINHARDT: (Warning, to Helen's.) Councillor...

(Eric's normally calm demeanor shows a glimmer of alarm. He stands to address Reinhardt, but Helen waves him back, assures him it's under control.)

HELEN: (Angry, to the female prosecutor.) Are you claiming he's not fit to stand trial? Why in God's name wasn't this brought up at the hearing two weeks ago?!

REINHARDT: (Warning, stronger this time.) Councillor!

FEMALE PROSECUTOR: The hearing was **not** to determine my client's mental health, it was to determine the feasibility of an out-of-court settlement for Mr Atchison's brutal assault on Mr Brinkley!

HELEN: (Losing it.) To blackmail the defendant, you mean! You're as loony as your client!

(A shouting match ensues between Helen and the prosecution team.)

REINHARDT: Order! ORDER!! (Slams the gavel down loudly.)

DARIA: (In the moment of otherwise-silence that ensues.) All that's missing is a juggling act.

(Jasmine giggles. More snickers from the jury -- they clearly find Daria's antics amusing, but we still don't see them.)

HELEN: (Hisses.) Daria!!

REINHARDT: (Strictly, looking directly at Daria.) Miss?

(She looks up at him, points questioningly to herself.)

REINHARDT: Yes, you with the green jacket and spectacles. Are you familiar with the term "contempt of court"?

DARIA: (Stares him down, fearless.) I'm aware of my own contempt **for** court.

REINHARDT: (Infuriated.) Young lady, you will shut that lip of yours RIGHT NOW or you will experience contempt of court firsthand! I will **NOT** warn you again!

(Daria smirks again.)

CUT TO:

INT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, JAKE'S OFFICE.

(Intern #3's in the hot seat and in the same shape as the other two.)

INTERN #3: ...I guess I was hopin' to just recuperate from last semester for awhile. This internship thing was my Dad's idea, he wanted me to earn some money.

JAKE: (Nods.) Yeah, I hear that. (Childhood trauma bubbling up.) **My** Dad sent me off to military school when I was eight! "Get you whipped into shape, Jakey, maybe you'll learn to take care of yourself instead of sponging off **us** your whole life!" Ohhhh, how he **mocked** me, said I'd never amount to anything, never raise a family, never land a job anywhere--

INTERN #3: (Looking around uncomfortably.) Umm, maybe I should go...

JAKE: (Bangs his fist on the desk.) WELL I SHOWED HIM!! I RUN MY *OWN* BUSINESS NOW! I'M MY *OWN* BOSS, DAMMIT! (Stands, stomps on the floor with one foot, talks down to it.) HEAR THAT, DAD?! YOU WERE *WRONG*!! OL' "MAD DOG" MORGENDORFFER UNDERESTIMATED LI'L JAKEY DIDN'T HE!!

INTERN #3: (To Quinn.) Umm, I really think I should go now.

QUINN: No, it's okay, he gets like this sometimes.

INTERN #3: (Hastily.) I... just remembered... I have another interview I need to get to.

QUINN: Don't forget to call me tonight.

(Intern #3 backs slowly away from Jake and high-tails it out.)

JAKE: (Still venting resentment, yelling at the floor.) HOPE YOU LIKE IT DOWN THERE WITH THE WORMS, DAD!! YOU HEAR ME?! THE *WORMS*!!!

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM.

HELEN: (A lull in proceedings, aside to Eric.) This is *not* going well.

ERIC: (Reassuringly.) You're doing an excellent job, Helen.

DARIA: (Louder than necessary.) Isn't that for the jury and Wapner up there to decide?

REINHARDT: (Overhears.) Young lady, you have been *warned* not to make a mockery of this court!

DARIA: Too late for that, Your Honor. You made a mockery of it yourself by even allowing this preposterous case.

(Reinhardt has the gavel raised, but lets it hang there, speechless at the audacity of someone this young.)

DARIA: (Stands.) Don't you see it's just an underhanded attempt to manipulate the system, waste the court's time, keep real cases from going to trial, and milk as much money as possible? This should've been thrown out at the preliminary hearing long ago.

REINHARDT: (Furious.) THAT DOES IT! YOUNG LADY, I FIND YOU IN CONTEMPT OF THIS COURT!! YOU WILL PAY A FINE OF \$100 AND PERFORM 40 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE!! (Sharp crack of the gavel.)

DARIA: Aren't you supposed to be laughably lenient on first-time offenses by minors?

REINHARDT: BAILIFF, ESCORT THIS IMPERTINENT ADOLESCENT OUT OF MY COURTROOM *AT* *ONCE*!!! (Bangs the gavel again.)

(Helen is mortified.)

DARIA: (Deadpan, to Jasmine.) I'm so glad we had this time together. (To Atchison, who doesn't look well at all.) Don't worry, I hear lethal injection's not that bad. Beats firing-squad, anyway, sometimes they miss and you die slowly.

(Helen's using every nuance of self-control to keep from yelling at Daria in front of everyone. Daria grabs her cellular phone from the table as the bailiff arrives and leads her out. She wears that smirk the whole time.)

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, HALLWAY OUTSIDE COURTROOM.

(The bailiff lets Daria go and disappears back inside, doors closing behind. Daria pokes at Helen's cell phone.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: LANE RESIDENCE.

(Sound of phone ringing.)

CUT TO:

INT.: LANE RESIDENCE, CERAMIC BUNKER.

(Loud music drowning out the phone-ring. Close-up of Amanda's [Mrs Lane's] hands, painting a ceramic bowl, and her feet resting on the workbench. Hold for a few seconds, then cut to shot of Jane at a pottery wheel, molding a lump of clay as she spins it with the foot-treadle. Same loud music and muffled phone, Jane doesn't hear it either.)

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM.

DARIA: Damn. (Digs out O'Neill's list, studies it, dials another number.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: HALCYON HILLS CORPORATE PARK.

CUT TO:

INT.: MICHELLE LANDON'S OFFICE.

(Initial close-up of the phone ringing on the desk, Michelle's hand lifting the receiver. Cut to Michelle at her desk, Jodie in an office chair by the window. Michelle wears the same outfit she did in "Gifted." Jodie is dressed in her typical school outfit.)

MICHELLE: Hello, Michelle Landon. (Pause.) Yes, just a moment. (Covers phone, hands it to Jodie.) Jodie, it's your friend Daria Morgendorffer from school.

(Jodie looks surprised Daria called her, takes phone from her Mom. Split- screen diagonal with Jodie and Daria on opposite sides.)

JODIE: Hello? Daria?

DARIA: Hi Jodie. Hope I'm not interrupting.

JODIE: No, of course not.

DARIA: I've been in a room full of idiots all morning and I really need to talk to someone intelligent.

JODIE: (Flattered by an actual Daria compliment.) Thanks. I read about your Mom's case in the paper. How's it going?

DARIA: Right now I haven't a clue. The judge slapped me with contempt and threw me out.

JODIE: (Eyes wide.) Oh my God. Why?

DARIA: I told him what I thought about the legal system and the frivolous lawsuit he's wasting his time on.

JODIE: Wow, that's great!

DARIA: (Surprised.) You're... not going to criticize my attitude?

JODIE: (Of-*course*-not tone.) *No*, I think it's cool you had the guts to speak your mind that way. I wish I could do that.

DARIA: My Mom didn't think it was all that cool.

JODIE: (Laughs.) I'll bet. Hey, listen, my Mom and I were gonna get dinner someplace after work, you wanna join us?

(People start to file out of the courtroom. Helen, Eric, Jasmine and Atchison arrive and find Daria.)

DARIA: Hang on, I'll ask my Mom, she just got out. (Covering the phone, to Helen.) Has justice prevailed yet?

HELEN: (Haggard.) Not yet, it's lunchtime. Court's in recess until one.

DARIA: (Sardonic.) Will you push me on the merry-go-round?

(...la la LA la la...)

(COMMERCIAL LEAD-IN: The bailiff escorting Daria out of the courtroom.)

END ACT 2.

(COMMERCIAL: Awright, lessee... Mentos candies [Aren't those commercials the most retarded things y'ever did see?], GameBoy Camera [I stand corrected, *those* are the most retarded.], and at least one but preferably two ads for other shows on MTV, most likely the 1998 MTV Movie Awards [Hosted by Ben Stiller!] and the 10-Spot lineup for some weeknight. Oh, and it's ten-to-the-hour, so we can't leave out an MTV News brief.)

BEGIN ACT 3.

RETURN TO:

EXT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING.

(City noise, traffic, etc.)

CUT TO:

INT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, JAKE'S OFFICE.

(Just Jake and Quinn now. Jake's since calmed down.)

JAKE: (Thinking out loud, making notes.) Well, all three of them were dressed like complete slobs, I don't know where these kids today *get* these ideas...? (Wraps up paperwork, turns to Quinn.) So what'd you think of the potential candidates, sweetie?

QUINN: Well... (Thinking, counting off on her fingers.) Okay, the first guy was *really* cute, but you could just *tell* he still lives with his parents and probably will for at least another five years. The second one said he had his own car, but he didn't say whether it was a convertible or not, so he's probably embarrassed, like maybe it's a station wagon or a Yugo or something. And I've seen the third guy waiting tables at Chez Pierre, so I know he knows a good place to take someone on a date, but let's face it he's gonna *have* to do something with that hair if he wants to be seen in public with *me*. But, I'll probably still talk to him tonight if he calls, he had kind of a sexy voice.

JAKE: (Taken aback, not the sort of response he'd expected.) Ummm, what I meant was, did you think any of them were qualified for a consulting job here?

QUINN: Oh. Well, I wouldn't rush into anything if I were you, Daddy. Trust me, it's best to just hold out and let *them* get back to *you*. And if they end up having to fight it out between them, that's always a good sign. You know, "best man wins" kind of thing. Plus, who knows, maybe while you're waiting you'll find somebody better!

(Another confused look on Jake.)

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALE COURTHOUSE, OUTSIDE COURTROOM.

HELEN: (Puts on her cheerful voice.) Michelle? Hi, this is Helen Morgendorffer, we met at Grove Hills?

(Split-screen diagonal between Michelle/Jodie and Helen/Daria.)

MICHELLE: (Remembers how Helen ticked her off before. A bit shortly.) Yes, I remember.

HELEN: Daria mentioned meeting you and Jodie for dinner, and I was just wondering what's in your part of town.

MICHELLE: (Offended, interpreting it as a racial comment.) What do you *mean*, "my part of town"?!

HELEN: I just meant--... Let me think... Chez Pierre is wonderful, although I've personally always found it a tad expensive...

MICHELLE: (Bristling.) Are you suggesting my family couldn't *afford* to eat at Chez Pierre?!

JODIE: (Whispered, to Michelle.) Mom, please, don't...

HELEN: (Flustered.) Well I suppose we could always meet someplace near my office. Let's see... there's Pizza For-- (Catches herself.) No, better not... the cafe at Seven Corners is good, on Monday nights they have an all-you-can-eat fried chicken special--

MICHELLE: (Practically shrieking.) And just *WHAT* makes you assume we like fried chicken?!

JODIE: (Despair.) Mom...

MICHELLE: (Sharply, into the phone.) Fine. What time?

HELEN: Well, I'm supposed to get off at five but with this trial I've had to sort of let things slip back at the office, so I really could stand to stay until about seven and catch up, but if that's too late I suppose I could cut out at six-thirty and make an early day tomorrow.

MICHELLE: Okay, sure, six-thirty, see you then.

(Helen hangs up. Expand the screen showing Jodie and Michelle.)

MICHELLE: (Shaking her head.) *God*, what a head-case.

(Cut back to Helen and Daria. Helen pockets the cellular phone, grabs Daria's collar, she's been trying to sneak away.)

HELEN: Not so fast, Daria Marie! (Points to the courtroom doors.) Just what the *hell* did you think you were *doing* in there?!

DARIA: (Deadpan.) Telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God?

HELEN: (Incredulous.) I don't know what's gotten into you today!

DARIA: A little enthusiasm about something, maybe? Weren't you trying to encourage me a few hours ago?

HELEN: (Realizes it.) I could just shoot myself for that.

CUT TO:

INT.: DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, JAKE'S OFFICE.

(Jake's in a business meeting with a partnership of three young executives, all of whom are watching Quinn as she spins herself around in an office chair.)

JAKE: Well, men, that's Morgendorffer Consulting's proposal in a nutshell. Anything still unclear?

(No response. They're all watching Quinn.)

JAKE: Great! (Produces a fancy pen, slides the contract toward the execs.) Shall we do the honors?

(The execs scribble down their signatures without taking their eyes off Quinn.)

JAKE: Terrific! I assume you'll be in touch, then.

(The execs file out, wordlessly.)

JAKE: (Closes door.) *Whew*! That went great! (To Quinn.) Did you see your ol' Dad in action there, sweetheart?

QUINN: (Stops the spinning office chair.) Huh?

JAKE: ("Studly" voice.) They must've seen how... cool I was on the outside. (Now normal Jake.) 'Course I was nervous as hell about that one, even kinda dizzy there.

QUINN: (Touches her hands to the side of her head, looks nauseous from all that spinning.) Uuck. Me too.

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALDE COURTHOUSE, OUTSIDE COURTROOM.

DARIA: Mom, the whole lawsuit's a joke. I know it, you know it, the jury knows it. Even Reinhardt, probably.

HELEN: Daria, it's not your place to--

DARIA: (Just a mite upset.) Don't talk down to me like I'm Quinn, Mom. I'm smarter than that. If you want to win this case, plead sanity. Appeal to the jury's intelligence to see through this charade. Trust me, they'll respect you for it.

HELEN: (Skeptical, but trying to be encouraging.) And how do you know that?

DARIA: Gut feeling.

CUT TO:

INT.: LAWNDALDE COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM.

(Close-up of the jury. We can now see that a few of the front-row jurors have thick Daria-style glasses and Daria-esque blankly detached looks.)

REINHARDT: Has the jury reached a verdict?

(Cut to the defense team. Daria's back with Helen, but Helen has one hand under Daria's chin and the other tightly over her mouth.)

DARIA: (Thought voice-over.) "No, trial first, verdict afterwards!"[*]

[*] From "Alice in Wonderland", of course.

FOREPERSON: Yes we have, Your Honor. (Hands the slip of paper to the bailiff, who passes it to Reinhardt.) Of the charges of assault, we the jury find the defendant, Carl Atchison...

(Beat. Rapid-cut close-ups of the prosecution team, Atchison, Eric, Helen and Daria. All but Daria wear tense expressions.)

FOREPERSON: ...not guilty.

REINHARDT: (Satisfied.) Mr Brinkley, the jury has ruled against Mr Atchison being at fault for your injuries. As that is the basis of your claim for damages, this case is dismissed. (Final strike of the gavel.)

(Reactions from the court, murmurs. Eric, Helen and Atchison swap handshakes. Daria stands vacantly through the whole thing, wincing when Helen hugs her.)

JASMINE: (Claps.) Awright, Uncle Eric!

DARIA: (To Jasmine.) Guess it came up tails.

JASMINE: (Frowns, not getting it.) Huh?

JUMP-CUT TO:

INT.: LAW OFFICES OF VITALE, DAVIS, HOROWITZ, RIORDAN, SCHRECKER, SCHRECKER, AND SCHRECKER; HELEN'S OFFICE.

(Zoom in on the door, with all the attorneys' names.)

HELEN'S VOICE: (Pleased.) Jake, honey, we *won*!

(Split-screen with Helen and Jake on phones in their respective offices. Daria's in Helen's chair, Helen is standing.)

JAKE: Really? Well I got the Matthews Brothers contract!

HELEN: That's wonderful! Are we still on for dinner? We decided on the Seven Corners Cafe, Daria's friend Jodie is coming too, you remember the Landons?

JAKE: The black girl? Sounds great, Quinn's bringing a friend too!

HELEN: *Jesus*, Jake, don't say anything like that when we get there! You know how easy it is to get her mother going! (Looks alarmed.) Did you say one of Quinn's friends is coming too?

JAKE: Yeah, she called her earlier. I think she said her name's Sandi, or something like that.

HELEN: (Despairing.) Oh *God* just what I don't need, another perfectly good day ruined by that bitch Linda...

JAKE: Great, see you then, honey!

(Both hang up. Full-screen on Helen's office.)

HELEN: (Right back into stressed-out mode again, looks at her assistant's empty desk.) *Look* at this, for God's sake didn't she *DO* anything while I was gone?!

DARIA: Mom, can I try Jane one last time?

HELEN: (Distracted.) Sure honey, I'll just be down the hall, dial 9 then the pound sign for an outside extension, oh and if you hear a tone, that's the call waiting, just push "hold" to switch lines and take a message for me will you? Or if it's Eric or my assistant have them page me, they've got my number. (She's out now.)

(Daria dials.)

CUT TO:

EXT.: LANE RESIDENCE.

(Loud music, as before.)

CUT TO:

INT.: LANE RESIDENCE, CERAMIC BUNKER.

(Drowned-out phone. Close-up of Amanda's hands and feet working on a clay pot, as always. This time, though, Jane's feet are propped up on the bench next to Amanda's, and Jane's hands are painting ceramics as well. Unlike Amanda, she still has her shoes on. Hold for a few seconds, then:)

CUT TO:

INT.: LAW OFFICES OF VITALE, DAVIS, HOROWITZ, RIORDAN, SCHRECKER, SCHRECKER, AND SCHRECKER; HELEN'S OFFICE.

DARIA: Damn.

HELEN: (Reappears in doorway, rushed.) C'mon, Daria, let's get out of here before they ask me to work the night.

CUT TO:

EXT.: SEVEN CORNERS CAFE, EVENING.

(Helen's car pulls up outside.)

CUT TO:

INT.: SEVEN CORNERS CAFE.

(Everyone else is already present and waiting as Daria and Helen enter. Clockwise around the rectangular table are: Sandi, Linda, two

empty seats, Jake, Quinn, Jodie, Michelle. Food has already been ordered, there's a big plate of fried chicken pieces in the center, with biscuits, salad and drinks all around. Helen takes the seat next to Jake, putting Daria beside Linda. Greetings all around, except from Jake, who's got a paper.)

HELEN: (False friendliness.) Linda! It's nice to see you again.

LINDA: (Not even attempting to feign courtesy.) If only the feeling could be mutual.

(Daria looks to Helen for an explanation, none comes.)

HELEN: (To Linda.) So how have you been?

LINDA: (Smug.) Well today I was nominated for Employee of the Quarter for the fifth consecutive time, earning me the admiration of my daughter and co-workers alike, so I sure as *hell* can't complain. (A bit snide.) And you?

(Sandi shoots Quinn a superior look.)

HELEN: Well, I had quite a successful day in court myself--

JAKE: (Looks up from his paper.) Oh, hi honey, you made it! We ordered dinner already, hope that's okay.

(Helen glares at Jake for interrupting her. Having officially announced dinner, Jake puts down the paper and digs in. The others follow suit, except for Linda and Helen. Daria raises an eyebrow, sensing there's something up with these two that's been going on for some time now.)

HELEN: (Reaches for a piece of chicken.) Linda? Aren't you hungry?

LINDA: I think I'll just have some salad, thanks. I wouldn't want to have to start wearing clothes in *your* size.

HELEN: (Puts the chicken back. Indignant, but covering it with a false good demeanor.) Well, for your information, I happen to be *down* a full size since the last time we saw each other!

LINDA: I see. (Points at Helen's face, understated hostility.) And is that a brand-new wrinkle up there?

HELEN: (Topic-change.) What I was *trying* to say before being interrupted-- (Another glare at Jake, who doesn't notice.) --is that I single-handedly won the Atchison case today, the one all over TV and the papers!

(Now it's Quinn's turn to look superior to Sandi. Daria frowns at the fact Helen didn't even acknowledge her strategy.)

HELEN: (Proud.) Eric's talked about making me a full partner with the firm.

LINDA: (Snide, mocking her career.) Oh, that's *great*, Helen. It must be nice, being the best at being deceitful and manipulative.

JAKE: (Just doesn't get it.) Yeah, that's great, honey!

(Both Helen and Linda glare at Jake. Michelle and Jodie exchange glances and continue eating, trying to ignore them.)

LINDA: (Not missing a beat.) But why don't we see if you actually *get* the partnership before we deciding whether you're a success or not?

(Helen looks like she wants to bite back, but doesn't have the backbone. Quinn looks pleadingly at Helen, hoping she'll do it. Jake finishes eating, picks up the paper again and peeks over it, afraid to say anything. Daria, expressionless, looks back and forth, tiny smirk, decides it's her job to bring this to an end.)

DARIA: (To Linda.) So have you ever actually *won* Employee of the Quarter?

HELEN: (That was the cue she needed.) Yes, Linda, have you?

LINDA: (To Daria.) Excuse me, I don't believe we've been introduced.

HELEN: Linda, this is Daria--

(Quinn and Helen both speak at the same time.)

QUINN: --my cousin! HELEN: --my other daughter.

SANDI: (Aside, to Linda.) She's like adopted or something.

LINDA: (Snorts, aside to Sandi.) God. She's even less cute than Quinn. It must run in the family.

(Helen and Quinn overhear, get genuinely pissed-off looks.)

DARIA: (Shakes it off.) Fortunately I'm not so superficial that I'd use cuteness as the sole criterion of personal worth.

LINDA: And just what is *that* supposed to mean?

DARIA: Sorry, too many big words? I do that sometimes. I'll try to keep it down to two syllables max.

(Both Daria and Linda get evil smirks, like "I've just found a worthy opponent.")

DARIA: But let's not change the subject. (Looks to Helen.)

HELEN: (Picking up.) Yes, Linda, tell us: Have you, or have you not, ever been awarded Employee of the Quarter?

LINDA: (Awkwardly.) Uh... I... (Loath to admit it.) No. (Quickly adds.) But I *have* been runner-up the past three times!

HELEN: (Brightens, puts on the false cheerfulness.) Well, there's nothing wrong with that, right Daria? (Smiles at her daughter.)

DARIA: (Deadpan.) Absolutely. There's no shame in being second place.

QUINN: (Right on cue.) Yeah, like if you're in a club, the vice-president is just as important as the president, only she has to be VP because you can only have one president. But that doesn't mean she's not as *good* as the president!

SANDI: (Can't very well let *that* go unchallenged.) No *way*, Quinn. If you're in second place it's because you just weren't *good* enough to be first!

LINDA: (Turns to Sandi, angry.) Whose side are you on?!

SANDI: (Trying to change the subject.) Uh... The food here is pretty good.

HELEN: (Giving Daria an opening.) Yes, I just love the flakey crust on their chicken!

DARIA: (Looking Linda square in the eye.) The crust isn't the only thing here that's flakey.

JAKE: (Lowers the paper, glares.) Daria!

(Helen kicks Jake under the table, winks sideways to Daria that it's okay.)

DARIA: (To Helen, giving *her* an opening.) Are we getting dessert?

HELEN: (Finally has the guts to say something.) No, it's not like we need all those extra calories. (Evil smirk.) Especially *you*, Linda!

LINDA: (Outraged, now that Helen's actually joined in.) That is quite enough! I for one am *not* going to stand here and listen to this! (Starts to stand up.)

(Daria nudges her plate forward into Linda's beverage, which tips over the edge of the table, into Linda's lap. Michelle and Jodie gasp, look up.)

LINDA: (Stands all the way, arms out, looks down at the front of her stained clothes.) Oh *nooooo*! This outfit is *ruined*! (Grabs Sandi's wrist, prepares to leave.) You realize the cleaning bill for this is coming out of your Fashion Club's treasury!

SANDI: (Horrified.) Mo-OOMMMM!! You can't *do* that! They'll hate me! They won't want me for president anymore!

LINDA: Well then maybe they should get a *new* president. Quinn, perhaps?

(By this time they're at the door. Linda shoots Helen a hateful "this isn't over yet" glare. Quinn and Helen exchange the same smirk that Linda and Sandi wore at the end of "Fair Enough". Once again, Helen completely overlooks Daria.)

MICHELLE: (To Jodie.) Are there any white students at Lawndale whose families *aren't* basket-cases?

JAKE: (Looks up from paper, sees Linda and Sandi leaving.) Oh, are they done already?

CUT TO:

INT.: MORGENDORFFER KITCHEN, EVENING.

HELEN AND QUINN: *YY-EE-SSSSSS*!!

(The two high-five each other just as Daria walks in.)

QUINN: We finally showed those two!

HELEN: (Hugs Quinn.) You were *great*, sweetheart!

(Daria watches them ignore her, digs in the fridge for a pop, starts to head out to the living room.)

QUINN: We should go out and celebrate! Cashman's is open 'til 12 during Midnight-Madness Month!

HELEN: Cashman's it is! Daria, you're welcome to come along.

DARIA: (Blandly.) No, thanks.

HELEN: (Notices her sullenness, goes over to her.) Honey, I know I got upset with you today at the trial, but I just wanted to say...

(Daria looks hopeful at the prospect of encouragement from Helen.)

HELEN: (Continuing.) ...I hope you had a good time today anyway.

DARIA: Sure. Great.

HELEN: Now are you *positive* you won't join us?

DARIA: Hell yeah. I'll just go sit on my ass in front of the damn TV.

HELEN: (Frowns.) Language!

CUT TO:

EXT.: SIDEWALK, MORNING. TUESDAY.

(Daria and Jane are walking to school together. Jane has her left hand wrapped tightly with gauze.)

DARIA: I tried to call you twice, but no one answered.

JANE: Yeah, I was in my Mom's ceramics bunker, you can never hear the phone down there. (Holds up her bandaged hand.) Got a wicked kiln burn you've just *got* to see.

DARIA: If you'd like to sue the manufacturer, I just happen to know an excellent personal-injury attorney.

JANE: Yeah, how'd it go with Helen?

DARIA: It was a blast. You missed out on some great courtroom sketches. The expression on Judge Reinhardt's face when he threw me out was just priceless.

JANE: Wow. You've gotta tell me all about it at our after-school pizza party.

DARIA: Can't, sorry. I've got community service for the next two weeks, four hours a day.

JANE: So was it worth it?

DARIA: Well, I made my Mom about go ballistic. I got to not make friends with a whole bunch of new people. And I fearlessly exposed our decaying and ineffectual judicial system for the sickening cesspool that it is.

JANE: So no downside, you're saying.

(Cut to show Jane and Daria walking away down the sidewalk, toward the horizon.)

DARIA: Well, my Mom still doesn't give me credit for anything good I do. But then, anything I can use as an excuse to lash out at the bleak, soul-shrivelling reality of my life is a plus in my book.

JANE: (Claps Daria on the shoulder with her good hand.) Amen to that, sister.

(...la la LA la la...)

(CREDITS AND CUTE LITTLE RENDERINGS OF THE CHARACTERS.)

THE END

AUTHOR'S NOTES: *Whew*. A Daria fanfic that doesn't even mention Trent or "Sick, Sad World". Knew I could do it.

Essentially, I know squat about the nuances of our legal system and I suck at coming up with good court cases. But like Daria, I'm a firm believer in "What I don't know, I can fake." If you were wondering why the trial details are sort of glossed over in this script, that's why. If I screwed something up, please don't mail to tell me about it cuz I really don't care. This is the last courtroom setting I'll ever use, so it's not like corrections are going to help me or anything.

I'd originally had a different personal-injury type case planned for the story, but the road-rage/harrassment bit came from a personal experience as I was writing this. I really was followed and shouted at by a psychopath who didn't like my driving, and he really was an ordinary-looking middle-aged guy. Creeped the hell outta me, but good for inspiration. (Alas, the real-life guy didn't fall and crack his head open like the plaintiff in this script. But then, if he had

he probably would've sued me as well.)

You'll notice I did take the liberty of guessing at Daria's middle name. It was a toss-up between Lynn and Marie, the two most common female middle names. (It came up tails.) If the show someday reveals I was wrong, feel free to snicker at me mercilessly.

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End
file.